

## **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District Advisory Board**

### **4.19.07 Meeting minutes**

#### **Town Hall Board of Selectmen's meeting room**

**Present:**

Al Hicks

George Infanti

John McCormack

Mel Reeve

Mike Trajano

**Absent:**

Tom Brennan

Dave Roedel

**Unknown:**

Jim Dannis

Bill Parker, Director Community Development/TIF Administrator

Shirley Wilson, Recording Secretary

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John McCormack opened the meeting at 7:30AM.

#### **1. INTRODUCTION OF MIKE TRAJANO**

J. McCormack introduced Mike Trajano, Business Administrator for the Milford School District, as the new school representative to this Board. J. McCormack noted that there may be some immediate interest for the school district, with the possible tie-in via a potential roadway, at least on paper, from the TIF site to the north end of the school site on Heron Pond Rd, and the possibility of services as well.

#### **2. REVIEW OF AGENDA:**

J. McCormack reviewed the agenda with no additions from the Board. J. McCormack inquired if the planned distribution of notes from the February minutes had been circulated. B. Parker replied that he will do so this week. G. Infanti motioned to accept the minutes from the March 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. All were in agreement.

#### **3. UPDATE ON BROX MARKETING EFFORTS – Brad Vear**

Brad Vear began by saying that his focus has been to get word out that the zoning has been changed, because there is very little knowledge of that out there. He has been concentrating on marketing strictly to regional developers, which has been ongoing, but it has been difficult to get their attention even with personal phone calls. A confidential list of marketing names was distributed. The information was methodically sent out about two weeks ago to nearly 120 contacts, via email or letter and then a follow up phone call was placed to about a third of the list. He has not had any concrete feedback, although there have been some questions. B. Vear explained that there is some trepidation by many of the developers and they are very slow to moving on anything. Elmer Pease has demonstrated an interest, but only as mixed use, in conjunction with multi-family on the adjacent parcels. There is also a small developer out of Hooksett, but it's still too early to tell. B. Vear said that they have an email program which tracks website hits and the response on return calls and interest has been lukewarm. J. McCormack asked if a blurb was sent out. B. Vear replied that yes there is a hook on the website, *newly re-zoned commercial property*; however, one thing that might be helpful would be a link to the Town's website describing what the ICI-2 zone offers. J. McCormack then inquired what could be done on the Town's website. B. Parker said we could develop a page dedicated to the marketing efforts for Brox and a discussion regarding the importance of the getting information out on the web followed.

G. Infanti commented that this was a good list for marketing, and agreed that the developers are very cautious; these are not good economic times. Amherst was fortunate to set the hook early, but the main difference with Amherst is that all a developer needs is a bulldozer to move the land. The Brox property is virgin land and we will need a developer with deep pockets for the infrastructure costs, although the zoning change is in our favor and should spark more interest. B. Vear said that they're marketing another property in the ICI district, on Elm St, that has seen a flurry of activity since the re-zoning; from

investors, manufacturing and auto sales. The P&S is with a manufacturer surprisingly, but the auto dealers had the highest level of interest and a discussion pertaining to the removal of that use from the ICI-2 district followed.

B. Parker reiterated that we are in cautious economic times and maybe once the corner develops, there would be more interest. J. McCormack asked that Mr. Vear continue to keep the Board up to date and maybe pick three to five prospects for a concerted effort with some type of personalized representation, if only to get reaction. We will try to get additional tools in place and more information on the website. B. Parker gave a copy of the CURP presentation to Mr. Vear. J. McCormack noted that our target was to develop the first six (6) or seven (7) lots over the next five or six years; the first phase of the Brox property north of the By-pass.

#### **4. UPDATE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP/NU/MIDC – Bill Parker**

B. Parker distributed the NU CURP survey to the Board and to Brad Vear. B. Parker said that we could fill the survey out on paper and then submit by email before the deadline on May 16<sup>th</sup>. B. Parker went over each section and summarized the information as being good background to have available for prospective developers.

Section # 1: Access to customers/markets; B. Parker,  
Section # 2: Agglomeration; B. Parker with additional input from B. Vear and M. Monks,  
Section # 3: Cost of land; B. Parker and M. Monks (also contact with local landlords),  
Section # 4: Labor; B. Parker (using state resources),  
Section # 5: Municipal process; B. Parker,  
Section # 6: Quality of life-Community; B. Parker with M. Trajano doing part D for schools,  
Section # 7: Quality of life-Site; B. Parker (surprised that there are so few questions),  
Section # 8: Business incentives; B. Parker, M. Monks and A. Hicks (additional state resources),  
Section # 9: Tax rates; B. Parker (Town Hall information)  
Section #10: Access to information; B. Parker (Website issues)

B. Parker said the survey shouldn't be too difficult although it will take some digging. The sections will go out to the respective individuals, including Mike Monks, this week. B. Parker then said that he will be out of the office next week, but will do the survey upon his return. It would also be good to go over the answers as a group, prior to submitting this electronically to Don Zizzi; and everyone agreed.

B. Parker mentioned that he had the invoice for this project. A. Hicks said that per Don Zizzi we are to pay the invoice when we get the State money. Additionally, he had a discussion with the state last week, and hopefully the money will be available in a couple of months, but reiterated that the MIDC was only responsible for \$2500. B. Parker confirmed that part was in writing and will follow up with Don Zizzi to confirm our understanding regarding the payment.

A. Hicks inquired how many other towns were involved. B. Parker said he will find out from Don. A. Hicks then stated that he was not concerned with Milford being the first, but would be worried if there is no one coming after us. J. McCormack added that the data is not meaningful unless we have comparisons. A. Hicks mentioned a point that Paul Amato brought up at the last MIDC meeting, about the section regarding permits. For example, question #14 asks *what is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion or occupation in existing structures*. Paul Amato said that depending on the applicant's preparedness and the scope of the requirements, there could be a very big variation. B. Parker said we would need to go through our recent applications and average out the time. Walgreens took four months, while a simple industrial application would only take one month. Regardless, our development time is pretty quick.

J. McCormack suggested that we compile a list of questions for Don; regarding clarification on the following items:

- ◆ The degree of preparation of an applicant,
- ◆ The nature of the request,
- ◆ What they perceive to be the starting point of the application; initial discussion, design review, preliminary plan, or final application submittal,

G. Infanti said that there ought to be room for revisions as we are one of the first groups to fill the survey out. B. Parker added that with every community being so different, they may have just been trying to develop the questions as best they could. B. Parker will submit the questions to Don Zizzi.

## **5. UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT CONTACTS**

J. McCormack said that he would really like to get someone in here so that we could hear some feedback.

B. Parker noted that he has been in contact with:

- ◆ Elliott Fierberg of Konover, through email and phone calls. The last email pertained to reviewing the information that was sent. Mr. Fierberg was invited to talk with us.
- ◆ Jim Lamp of Eastern Development, out of northern MA. Jim and an engineer from VHB came into the office in January to discuss doing something on the west side of town.
- ◆ Cliff Harris, a commercial realtor with Prudential Verani. Discussion about the west side of town and provided information to him.

B. Parker conveyed that there has only been general interest in the property and hopefully the word will quietly spread. We will, however, follow up monthly. J. McCormack again referenced the website and its importance. M. Reeve said that once we complete our survey, there might be some prospects out there who would be interested in the results, meaning that we may have already answers, when all the other places they're considering, don't. J. McCormack said that would be another question for Don; how to use the results.

## **6. DISCUSSION ON EXPANSION OF TIF DISTRICT BOUNDARIES – 2008 Warrant**

B. Parker explained that when this was first thought out, we wanted to keep the boundaries of the district pretty small; just for the Brox and Hendrix properties. However, if we're generating more interest, especially at the intersection of 101 and Old Wilton and the old police station site, and if we get potential development out there, it would be great to expand the boundaries so we could capture that property tax revenue. We don't want to miss any opportunities and should think about expanding the district for the 2008 warrant. J. McCormack suggested that we create a conceptual map showing existing and proposed boundaries; suggested sites to include would be New England Steel, the vacant lot by the bank, the old police station, the superfund site and the site at the end of Hollow Oak. M. Trajano inquired about any potential use for the superfund site. B. Parker replied that the state currently owns the former OK Tools site and as soon as it is clean, maybe in seven (7) to ten (10) years, it will revert back to town ownership. A discussion followed. M. Reeve noted that the sites along the north side of Elm St won't require infrastructure, so we would benefit by having them involved in some sort of development. B. Parker added that we would then get the taxes to put toward the infrastructure in the rest of the district. A. Hicks said that we do have to anticipate some sarcasm at deliberative session because we are capturing taxes and preventing the town from theoretically benefiting by lowering the tax rate; some of the same individuals will bring the same opposition as in the past. M. Reeve said we will just have to sell the idea. J. McCormack added that it all goes to the same pot at the end of the day and what we are bringing is hopefully a more coordinated marketing effort to development in general. It is part of the overall marketing and a longer term view of the mix that we are trying to bring of the area. M. Trajano said that the tax funds will ultimately go to the town after the bonds are paid off and the infrastructure is completed besides, we're not generating any tax revenue right now, so where is the loss. A. Hicks added that some

monies could also go to the town during the bond years, if there is excess of what is required to pay towards the bonds. J. McCormack said that our maps are tools and we should keep them current in front of us for planning.

## **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

The next meeting date is scheduled for Tuesday, May 8, 2007 at 7:30 AM.

B. Parker said he will get with Tom Brennan to bring him up to speed.

A discussion took place regarding the condition of the Brox land. J. McCormack stated that the appearance of the property is very important and before we bring a potential developer out there, we should make the place look a little better. The road is a little rough and the Roedel piece is a significant collector of water; but overall the remainder of the property doesn't look too bad. Maybe we could whitewash the section just under the bridge. We should also see if we could trim some of the brush and clean up the trees that have fallen across the road. However, the site seems to be used as a dumping ground, so most importantly, we should clean up the area. Maybe we could get DPW to pick up the general debris and garbage, including the pallets, toilets, and mattresses. B. Parker said he would talk to Bill Ruoff and Guy Scaife to work this into their priorities.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30AM.

### **To do items:**

- ⇒ Set up meeting with Konover or other developer.
- ⇒ Update website
- ⇒ Maps for existing and proposed district
- ⇒ Brox industrial property
  - ⇒ Site presentation/clean up
  - ⇒ Revisit land prices
- ⇒ Economic Development partnership
  - ⇒ Complete survey
    - ⇒ Internal distribution and communications
  - ⇒ Contact with Don Zizzi
    - ⇒ How many other towns involved?
    - ⇒ How to use the results of the survey?
    - ⇒ Confirm the understanding for payment.
    - ⇒ List of questions regarding the survey.
  - ⇒ Update on DRED funding

### **Continuing items:**

- ⇒ Maintain an on-going progress file.
- ⇒ Monthly reports from Brad Vear
- ⇒ State support
  - ⇒ Ten year plan for access to the property
  - ⇒ Job creation within two-year periods
- ⇒ On-going contact with Land Quest.